

**Additional Views**  
**Rep. Nita Lowey**  
**FY2006 Foreign Operations**

The total amount recommended in the House Fiscal Year 2006 appropriations bill is \$20.27 billion, \$2.56 billion below the President's request for this fiscal year. While I believe that this bill reflects, for the most part, a bipartisan compromise on the distribution of resources, I feel that this allocation fails to meet our overall foreign policy and national security needs at a time when the world is facing greater instability due to disease, deprivation and conflict.

The world's attention is currently focused on meeting the Millennium Development Goals and on the upcoming G8 Summit, at which wealthy nations will announce new commitments to achieve development progress. At this time, when the United States should be playing a leading role in generating the international political will and resources to tackle the myriad of global challenges, we have been presented with a budget request and a budget resolution that allow for no substantial new commitments of resources. I am deeply disappointed that we will miss this tremendous opportunity.

I am pleased that the bill at least maintains last year's levels for Child Survival and Health programs and Development Assistance programs, and provides increased funding for HIV/AIDS assistance, Basic Education and the Millennium Challenge Account over the Fiscal Year 2005 enacted levels.

In light of the continuing emergency on the African continent and the fast spread of HIV/AIDS in many parts of Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America, I wish we could have devoted greater resources toward combating this deadly disease, particularly through the Global Fund. However, I note that this bill allocates \$400 million for the Global Fund, double the amount requested by the Administration.

While the bill cuts \$1.25 billion from the President's request for the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the program receives a total of \$1.75 billion in FY2006, an increase of \$250 million over the FY2005 enacted level. I continue to be concerned both by the slow progress of the MCC in approving and funding programs and by the fact that the President continues to request increases for this Presidential initiative while cutting funding for core development programs.

I am also concerned that the bill provides no funding for the Global Environmental Facility (GEF). The GEF is the largest single funder of projects to improve the global environment, and every dollar invested by the U.S. in the GEF leverages \$14 from other sources.

I understand that the Chairman has proposed this cut due to concerns that the GEF has not implemented a performance-based allocation system. While I support the Chairman's

desire to spur management reforms at the GEF, I believe withholding our funding for the GEF is the wrong way to accomplish this.

While we have conditioned all assistance to the GEF on the completion of specific reforms, we have removed conditionality currently in law on U.S. military assistance to Indonesia. For the first time since Indonesian military-backed militias laid waste to East Timor in the wake of its August, 1999 independence referendum, we will provide FMF to Indonesia free of any conditions. And, despite the Guatemalan government's non-compliance with military reforms stipulated in the Peace Accords, we have removed IMET restrictions on that country as well.

I also regret that the bill does not fully fund the President's requests for refugees and peacekeeping and reduces funding for the International Fund for Ireland from FY2005 levels. I do note, however, that additional funds for refugees and peacekeeping were included in the FY2005 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill.

I am pleased that that this bill does restore funding for reproductive health programs which were cut in the President's request. It increases bilateral family planning assistance to \$432 million, the FY2005 House-passed level, and earmarks an additional \$25 million in International Organizations and Programs funds for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA.) The bill further specifies that any funds for UNFPA that cannot be spent should be transferred to USAID specifically for bilateral family planning programs – a provision that was carried in the FY2005 bill as well.

This bill also provides a total of \$465 million for basic education, \$65 million more than the FY05 level, including \$15 million for a pilot program to eliminate school fees. It also requires a GAO study on our education programs to ensure we maximize the effectiveness of our aid dollars.

Importantly, Israel's annual economic and military aid package is fully funded in this bill, including early disbursement of these funds within 30 days of the bill's passage. The bill includes language carried in previous years placing conditions on U.S. support for any future Palestinian state. This year, the bill includes an additional provision requiring a GAO audit of the FY06 West Bank and Gaza program, as well as a project-by-project plan from the State Department on how these funds are being spent. It also extends a requirement from the FY05 Supplemental for regular reports on Palestinian progress toward reforming security services, ending violence and incitement, and other key steps toward peace. These provisions will help ensure that U.S. assistance is properly monitored and is achieving the intended results.

An amendment offered by Ranking Member Obey and adopted during full Committee consideration of the bill will focus greater attention on democracy and education programs in Egypt. This provision, which earmarks \$50 million for democracy, governance, rule of law and human rights programs and \$50 million to improve access to primary and higher education, promote academic freedom and expand educational exchange programs, is intended to strengthen Egyptian civil society, enhance political

participation, and spur democratic reforms. While the provision does not specify from where this additional funding should be drawn within overall economic assistance to Egypt, I urge that it be offset from cash transfer assistance and not from other project assistance.

I am also pleased that the bill and report carry a number of provisions aimed at increasing the U.S. commitment to fighting gender-based violence around the world, including in areas with high HIV infection rates and in areas undergoing conflict and civil strife. I thank the Chairman for including a provision in the bill requiring that police, judicial, and military training programs funded in the bill develop training curricula on how to prevent and deal with victims of gender-based violence. I also note that the bill increases funding for UNIFEM and the UNIFEM Trust Fund for a total of \$5 million.

I commend the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations for a bipartisan process and a mostly fair and balanced distribution of resources within an unfortunately tight budget.